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Flu Cases on the Rise: Know Where to Go for Care
Good Hand Hygiene is Your Best Defense

(Fort Myers, Fla. – Jan. 2, 2019) Lee Health has experienced a sharp increase in flu cases recently—jumping from fewer than 90 cases during the week of Dec. 8 to more than 310 cases during the week of Dec. 23.

As flu season continues to ramp up, it's important for our community and seasonal visitors to take preventive steps to keep themselves and their loved ones safe. Lee Health encourages everyone to:

- Get the flu vaccine, as well as the pneumococcal vaccine (a secondary illness), if you are able
- Stay home when you are ill—especially do not visit the hospital if you have flu-like symptoms.
- Avoid bringing children under the age of 12 to hospitals when possible.
- Cover your cough and, if you use a tissue, dispose of it in a waste receptacle.

If you experience signs and symptoms of flu, avoid the emergency departments and instead visit your primary care doctor, a Lee Health Convenient Care, walk-in or urgent care center—they can diagnose and treat flu.

Throughout flu season, Lee Health's Mary Beth Saunders, D.O., system medical director, Epidemiology and Infection Prevention, reminds us of some of the various places we can catch the flu and other germs, including:

- Restrooms – buttons, levers, handles, any high-touch area
- Buttons and handrails – ATMs, store checkouts, staircases, elevators, escalators
- Gym equipment
- Shopping carts
- Gas pumps
- Desks – keyboards, phones, mouse, stapler, pens
- Handshakes
- Kitchen sponges, handles, countertops
- Accessories – purses, jewelry

To combat these germs, use hand sanitizer, practice good hand hygiene—wash hands often, wipe down surfaces before touching them (i.e., gym equipment, shopping carts) and avoid touching your face after touching these surfaces.

About Lee Health

Since the opening of the first hospital in 1916, Lee Health has been a health care leader in Southwest Florida, constantly evolving to meet the needs of the community. A non-profit, integrated health care services organization, Lee Health is committed to the well-being of every individual served, focused on healthy living and maintaining good health. Staffed by caring people, inspiring health, services are conveniently located throughout the community in four acute care hospitals, two specialty hospitals, outpatient centers, walk-in medical centers, primary care and specialty physician practices and other services across the continuum of care. Formerly known as Lee Memorial Health System, the organization began its second century of service with a new name in 2016. Learn more at www.LeeHealth.org.